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Orthodox Role in Ecumenical Movement Praised

(Rhodes) - The annual meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches opened on the Island of Rhodes on August 19 with a glowing tribute to the role of Eastern Orthodoxy in the development of the ecumenical movement.

Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the organization's general secretary, told the policy-making body that the Church of Constantinople was the first church officially to propose the creation of a permanent council of churches.

By this action, taken in 1919, he declared, "Orthodox church leaders thus broke new ground for the ecumenical idea and became pioneers for the World Council which was organized many years later". He noted that the proposal had stressed that contacts between the churches "need not be postponed till the day when there would be full doctrinal agreement, but that collaboration between the churches could prepare the way for full reunion".

That principle, Dr. Visser 't Hooft declared, "came to be a basic presupposition of the ecumenical movement".

Dr. Visser 't Hooft made his comments in an annual report presented at the opening session of the nine-day meeting (August 19-27). Attending are 72 delegates of the Council's Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox confessions from 24 countries and Gibraltar and 73 observers from six more countries and Cyprus.

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Included are the largest number of delegates from Orthodox churches in the Committee's history, and two representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, who participate as "observers". The Russian Orthodox Church is not a member of the World Council.

The meeting is the first ever held by the Committee in a country in which the Eastern Orthodox Church is the predominant religious body. The invitation to meet in Rhodes was extended by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Church of Greece and the Royal Hellenic Government. EPS, Geneva.

Roman Catholic Ecumenical Council Issue Raised

A report of the Executive Committee presented at the opening session reviewed WCC work during the past year.

It includes a five-paragraph section on the Ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII, in which it notes that at the time the Council was called the Executive Committee had made "no formal comment on the proposal" for lack of information and that "this reserved attitude proved to be wise". It adds:

"In the following months it became clear that the original impression which had been given by the religious and secular press, namely that this Council would deal mainly with the question of church unity and that invitations to attend the Council might be addressed to other churches was not correct."

The report also notes that in recent years "informal contacts" have existed between World Council staff and Roman Catholic theologians and that these contacts have enabled Council leaders both to gain clearer understanding of plans for the Ecumenical Council and to explain "the hopes and desires of the World Council with regard to relationships among the churches".

During these discussions, it adds, the World Council emphasized that relations could be greatly improved, "if opportunity were given for greater cooperation in social service and in working for just and durable peace, if there could be more discussions among theologians, and if all the churches would join in securing full religious liberty for all people in all lands".

The report says the World Council "will continue to follow the developments.... with interest, (for) as leaders of a movement which stands for church unity we cannot be indifferent to an event which affects so large a number of Christians and which cannot avoid having a bearing on relations among the several churches".

In another section of the document the Executive Committee reports that steps have been taken by the World Council and the Orthodox Church of Russia to "carry out their common aim to become better acquainted". It said these include the visit by two representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate to World Council headquarters in Geneva, in June, and a reciprocal visit to Moscow scheduled by WCC staff members in December. In addition, the report notes, arrangements have been made for the exchange of literature and documentation. EPS, Geneva.

State, Church Greet Delegates

Greetings were read to the Committee from King Paul of Greece, who recalled that the Apostle Paul visited the Island of Rhodes and wished that "the spirit of the great Apostle, who has passed through Rhodes, precisely nineteen centuries ago, guide you, your deliberations and your whole work".

A message from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I, welcomed the Committee. The Patriarch, who is acknowledged as the leader of the Orthodox world, said he hoped the committee's "location in this venerable seat of Christianity will be a source of divine inspiration for all of us and enable us to link and strengthen the bonds of mutual understanding and cooperation between us".
EPS, Geneva.

Proselytism Criticized

Mr. G. Voyadzis, Greek Minister of National Education and Religion, stressed, in a brief message of greeting, that obstacles to unity should be removed.

He said that "it must be understood that the penetration of a Christian confession into the area of another one by propaganda or through material offerings, the increase of the flock of one to the detriment of the other one not only is morally unacceptable, but creates a distrustful climate which hinders the effect of contact and collaboration".

Dr. Basil Ioannidis, permanent head of the department of religious affairs in the Greek Government's Education Ministry, said the Rhodes meeting has created "a new climate" in relations between Protestant and Orthodox churches.

But, he continued: "The differences between the churches and the difficulties involved appear so insurmountable, that the effort toward unity appears to be just short of Utopia. It may be that we appear foolish in what may seem a purposeless endeavour, but if this is so, then we are fools in Christ."

Dr. Ioannidis, who is chairman of the arrangements committee for the meeting, is a member of the theological faculty of Athens University.

Leaders of Orthodox churches attending the meeting include representatives of the Patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem and the Orthodox churches of Greece, Cyprus and Poland. (The Island of Rhodes is within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.) EPS, Geneva.

Mutual Study Advised for Eastern and Western Churches

(Rhodes) - Leaders of the Christian churches of the Western and Eastern traditions were told last week that they should learn to recognize the value of each other's particular traditions if they are to avoid the "special dangers" to which "every church tradition is exposed".

Dr. Edmund Schlink, professor of dogmatics at Heidelberg University, Germany, and an expert on Orthodoxy, declared that the two traditions "complement one another, and can warn and protect one another against the specific dangers inherent in their respective positions".

"The importance of the Eastern tradition for Western Christendom must not be underestimated", he declared. "It may also help us to examine from a fresh angle the differences between the Roman Church and the Reformation churches, and the free Protestant groups", he added.

Dr. Schlink addressed Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican members of the policy-making Central Committee of the World Council of Churches convened here in annual session. The meeting is the first held by the 90-member Committee in a country in which the Orthodox Church is the predominant religious body.

Emphasizing that "variety of tradition is an enrichment, as long as fellowship is maintained between the different traditions", he deplored attempts by Western churches to proselytise within the Eastern Church.

"The Western Church should be restrained from any such projects", he stressed, "through respect for the fact that the Eastern Church has survived centuries of oppression by Mongols, Arabs and Turks."

During the 20th century, he added in a reference to events after the 1917 Russian revolution, "it has suffered the bloodiest persecution ever experienced in the history of the Christian Church, and in face of that persecution has shown a spiritual strength which has strengthened the whole of Christendom".

In a second speech on the topic delivered at the same session, Professor Chrysostom Konstantinidis, a theological Professor in the Halki theological school of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey, urged a "larger study by Eastern and Western churches into each other's traditions in the light of the accepted 'Holy Tradition' of the 'ancient undivided Church'".

He noted that different "traditions" have been formed under different conditions of the churches, but that the "one, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church"... has not ceased to continue existing with its one, integral, and undivided Tradition of the Church.

"The existence of one or more parallel traditions beside the one Tradition of the Church, does not obscure or destroy the sacred character of the one Tradition; in the same way erroneous interpretations of the one revealed Truth do not destroy the Truth itself, but only damage the man who is misled by them," Professor Konstantinidis said. EPS, Geneva.

Closer WCC Ties with East Europe Churches Forecast

(Rhodes) - A trend towards closer relationships between the World Council of Churches and Christian churches in Communist countries has been forecast here.

Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, WCC general secretary, said in Rhodes that "the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church is in the process of discovering the World Council of Churches".

He noted that two representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate recently made a three weeks "get acquainted" visit to WCC headquarters in Geneva, and that a reciprocal visit is planned by council leaders to Moscow in December.

He suggested that the visit to Moscow "might open the way" for similar "strengthening of contacts" between the World Council and Orthodox churches of Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Rumania.

The WCC general secretary emphasized that in its contacts with churches in Communist countries the World Council is on constant guard against "political infiltration". He added that such infiltration is a threat to the council from Western as well as eastern sources and that the Council exercised "prudence" in all its relationships in which political pressure might be a factor.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft made his remarks in a press conference held here in connection with the annual meeting of the policy-making Central Committee of the World Council convened on the Island of Rhodes (August 19-27). EPS, Geneva

Careful Planning Urged for WCC Third Assembly

(Rhodes) - The World Council of Churches has been urged to plan its Third Assembly, in Asia, so that it "avoids the well-to-do bourgeois impression left on the minds of many Asians by Western missionaries".

Bishop John Shahovskoy of San Francisco, appealed to members of the Council's Central Committee convened in annual session here to plan a programme which would "make an impact on the Indian people and not make the mission of the Indian Church more difficult". Bishop Shahovskoy, a member of the Committee, represents the Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church of North America.

Principal Russell Chandran, Bangalore, of the Church of South India, told delegates that if the World Council meets in "rather expensive hotels", it would give support to Communist propaganda that "Christianity is a religion of the wealthy and not of the masses".

He asked that participants be carefully prepared for the meeting and that they visit areas not usually seen by tourists to observe "something of the real life of India and the Indian Church".

Methodist Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri of Buenos Aires, one of the five WCC presidents, asked for special provision for a strong group of additional participants from Latin America.

He said Latin America will have a population of between seven and eight hundred million by the end of this century, is in an "ex-colonial situation" like Asia and is experiencing increasing immigration from the Orient.

A proposal to hold the Third Assembly in New Delhi, India, in late November or early December, 1961, was submitted to the Committee by Dr. Robert S. Bilheimer, a WCC associate general secretary.

He said "the political and communal situation" in Ceylon makes it "inadvisable" to hold the meeting there as originally scheduled. EPS, Geneva.

WCC-IMC Integration Stirs Debate


(Rhodes) - "Overwhelming support" for the plan to unite the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council into a single world body has been reported to the WCC's Central Committee.

Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, New York, chairman of the WCC-IMC Joint Committee told the Committee that forty-four out of the 173 WCC member churches have indicated support of the plan.

At the same time twenty-two of the 38 national Christian councils in the International Missionary Council responded favourably.

Two WCC member churches voted in opposition to the plan. These were the French Reformed Church and the Church of Ireland (Anglican). The remainder of the WCC's 173 member churches have not yet replied.

Three national Christian councils affiliated with the IMC are opposed to the integration. They are in Norway, Belgium and Brazil. The Congo council has withdrawn from the IMC because of its opposition. Twelve have not yet replied.



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Draft forms of a constitution for the integrated body were submitted to the Central Committee for review by member churches during the coming year. A revised constitution will be submitted for adoption at sessions of the Central Committee next year.

The International Missionary Council is also expected to endorse the revised constitutional drafts in August of next year.

Final action on the scheme will be voted at the first session of the WCC's Third Assembly scheduled in India in late 1961. At that time the new constitution will need a two-thirds majority endorsement by members of both bodies before it becomes official. If it is adopted, the Assembly will then be convened as a meeting of the integrated organization. EPS, Geneva.

Orthodox Churches Object

The report touched off a sharp debate in which Eastern Orthodox representatives expressed strong opposition to the proposed integration.

The Metropolitan James of Philadelphia, representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, urged the World Council "to remain what it is - a Council of Churches".

He said Eastern Orthodoxy wished to be "positive and helpful" and to maintain its membership in the World Council, but that "our fears remain".

He said the Eastern Orthodox Church hesitated because the International Missionary Council includes members which are not churches and integration might mean that the World Council's missionary witness would be a non-church witness. "Can there be any witness apart from a church or confession?" he asked.

Professor Basil Ioannidis, of the Greek Orthodox Church, urged that the World Council move slowly because integration would result in a mammoth organization" which would be difficult to interpret. He added that the eleven-year-old World Council is still not understood by its own member churches and people.

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, general secretary of the International Missionary Council, replying to Professor Ioannidis' claim that the new organization would be "mammoth", said that the entire budget of the IMC amounted to less than half the extra sum needed to finance the new united body.

In a reference to the activity of sects that try to gain converts from Protestant churches in the mission field, he declared that Orthodox churches could be assured that "most bodies in the IMC are victims rather than aggressors".

The Metropolitan Parthenios of Carthage, representing the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, Egypt, declared: "For us Orthodox the word 'mission' is something which we fear. I don't know why. It's my tradition. For this reason I say to you 'go slowly'".

The proposed new constitution will be considered in sub-committee. Next steps are to be taken in plenary sessions before the Rhodes meeting closes on August 27.

EPS, Geneva.

Suspension of Nuclear Weapons Tests Urged

(Rhodes) - The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs has called for an indefinite suspension of all nuclear weapons testing.

Further, it has asked that the powers seek a treaty to cease all tests - atmosphere, space and underground - as the first step towards specific control and "verified disarmament".

Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, New York, CCIA director, urged the steps in a report to the annual meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches convened in Rhodes. The CCIA is a joint agency of the World Council and the International Missionary Council.

The report asks that all unilateral tests should be stopped in order to give the powers more time to arrive at an agreement on international controls. It says this "applies equally to the United States, the United Kingdom and the USSR".

The United States and the United Kingdom agreed last year to suspend all tests for a ten-month period which expires October 31. The Soviet Union rejected the scheme and conducted some testing last November.

In an introductory remark, Dr. Nolde noted that, "in the absence of any known method of verification (of underground tests) pressures are being exerted, especially in the United States, to resume underground testing" after the expiration of the agreement.

The report also asks that those powers which have not yet made tests should not launch them for military purposes as long as international control is under discussion. It added that this applies to France, as well as to any other country contemplating tests.

France has announced that it will conduct tests for the first time in the Sahara desert sometime this autumn.

Dr. Nolde said that the fact that possession of nuclear power has thus far been limited to three countries has been an advantage in work towards development of international controls. With testing by other countries planned, he said, it will mean further difficulties in achieving control.

The report states that it "allows" testing for peaceful purposes or to develop a method of identifying underground explosions as long as these are conducted under international control.

Dr. Nolde added that the Geneva Conference on the Cessation of Testing has made "encouraging, but slow progress" but that "no agreement has as yet been reached and disturbing differences must still be reconciled".

In another section of the report the Commission urged that all activities in outer space be subject to international control. It said that "there must be equal opportunity for peaceful scientific initiatives. The military rivalries of the earth are too dangerous to project into space," it comments.

In a section on East-West Negotiations and Disarmament, the Commission said the churches should "welcome" plans for consultations between Eisenhower and Krushchev.

But, it adds, the Berlin crisis and the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Geneva have "confirmed the impression" that "the aspirations of East and West are mutually exclusive". It continues:

"The great powers are nevertheless increasingly aware of the common danger of atomic warfare and the necessity to seek agreement in the field of armaments. The excessive destructive power now possessed by both sides has brought about an uneasy equilibrium. Thus new opportunities for discussion and negotiation are at hand."

In discussion following presentation of the report, the Rev. Peter K. Dagadu, general secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, urged the Central Committee to protest against nuclear tests scheduled in the Sahara Desert by the French government.

He said the French government has "flatly refused to consider protests" already sent it by the Ghana Christian Council and other African organizations and that "if nothing is done it is certain France will conduct the tests".

Pastor Charles Westphal, of the French Reformed Church, speaking in reply, said he agreed the tests should not be conducted, but that he was "surprised that the nation which have bombs should be allowed to continue experiments while those who do not have them cannot experiment".

He noted that the National Synod of the Reformed Church of France has gone on record in opposition to nuclear testing except for peaceful purposes. He added:

"I feel the search for greatness for France should be made elsewhere than in the area of atomic affairs."

EPS, Geneva.

Moscow's Metropolitan Nikolai Greet's WCC Central Committee

(Rhodes) - Metropolitan Nikolai of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church has expressed "great sympathy with the ecumenical movement" in a message read in Rhodes to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

The message says that Orthodox Christians "believe that our western brothers honestly aim at overcoming the destructive separation in faith 'in order to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'".

The Metropolitan recalls his "encounter and discussion with representatives of the World Council of Churches in Utrecht last year".

As a result of that meeting, held in August, two observers, with the right to speak but not vote, are attending the present meeting of the Central Committee. They are Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy, a Leningrad theological professor, and Mr. Victor Alexeev, a lay secretary in the administration of the Moscow Church.

Turning to social and international issues the message continues: "We Orthodox cannot but sympathise with the measures taken by the World Council of Churches and directed towards the solution of many social problems of our time.

"The fight against social untruth because of our realisation of the truth of Christ, the efforts to help the under-developed countries, the condemnation of colonial policy and race discrimination - all this is worthy of the active support of all Christians in accordance with the demands of Christian conscience."

The Metropolitan refers to "the struggle to stop the nuclear weapons tests and to achieve their complete abolition" as "our common moral task". He declares that "we Orthodox entirely share and support the efforts of the World Council of Churches towards this aim".

Referring to "the main task of the ecumenical movement, which aims at the unity of faith", the Moscow leader expresses hope that it will not be "overshadowed" by the WCC's social concern.

"We Christians must stand above the political contradictions of our time and give to the divided peoples an example of unity and peace, brotherhood and love, removing ourselves from all self-sufficient isolationism and unfriendly relations to each other".

Metropolitan Nikolai expresses satisfaction that the two Moscow Church representatives at Rhodes "have, for the first time, the possibility of observing the work of the ecumenical organisations, thus contributing to our mutual understanding".

He concludes: "I beg you to believe in our collaboration in everything which can serve the great task of re-uniting the Christians as well as the strengthening of peace among the nations."
EPS, Geneva.

Study on "Faith and Order" Planned

(Rhodes) - The World Council of Churches will study ways in which it can make work for Christian unity more central to its activities.

A report on the future of the Faith and Order Commission, the council unit which deals with theological work for Christian unity, has recommended more status and staff for the Commission following the next WCC assembly scheduled for late 1961. The report was presented by Professor Henri d'Espine, Geneva, representing the Commission's working committee, to the annual meeting of the WCC Central Committee in Rhodes.

The report warns that unless the traditional concern of the ecumenical movement with bringing the churches closer together in worship and structure is heeded, "we shall find ourselves remaining content with a form of organizational unity which leaves unfulfilled many of the central requirements of the Church's life". The Faith and Order Commission's working committee prepared the report.

It asks for the development of Faith and Order departments in national Christian councils, and advocates more regional meetings to discuss union between the churches.

It also suggests that regular consultations between churches engaged in negotiations and discussions about reunion in various parts of the world be held under official auspices of the Commission. Up to now they have been held "unofficially".

The document also presses for more regular theological discussions with "two groups who 'accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'" - the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches outside the World Council. (The WCC, according to its basis, is "a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour".)

Detailed proposals made for strengthening Faith and Order are described as an attempt to give it "a status and position appropriate to the central importance of the concern for church unity in the life of the WCC". The Commission is at present one of four departments in the council's Division of Studies and has a staff of one executive secretary.

The new suggestions include: increasing the staff from one to four persons; appointment of a director, who would also be an associate general secretary of the WCC and "intimately involved in the working out of general WCC policy at the highest level" and three other staff members for administration, research, and documentation and publications.

Speaking in support of the proposal, Bishop Otto Dibelius, Berlin, a WCC president, told the Central Committee: "If you want to keep up the spiritual level of the World Council you must give Faith and Order its right place and 'fair play'".

Dr. Kathleen Bliss of the United Kingdom (Anglican), a member of the WCC Executive Committee, said she doubted that changes in status and structure would produce the desired results. She pointed out that the Life and Work movement (the other main influence behind the founding of the WCC in 1948) had lost its name in the present structure of the council, but was carrying on its work "better than ever". She asked to keep this in mind and said it was already "deeply influencing the thinking" of other sections of the council.

The Central Committee instructed its finance committee to explore ways of increasing the staff of the Faith and Order Commission before 1961. The report will be considered further by the Faith and Order Commission itself and by a committee planning the programme and finance for the period after 1961. Another revised report on the subject will be made to the full Central Committee at its annual August meeting next year.

Evangelism Study Report to be Published.

At another session, it was announced that the World Council will publish a major study document dealing with the churches' approach to non-Christians.

A draft copy of the 32-page document was submitted to the Central Committee by Dr. D. T. Niles, executive secretary of its Department on Evangelism.

Titled "A Theological Reflection on Evangelism", the document is the result of a ten-year study conducted by the Department. Publication is scheduled sometime next year after final comments and suggestions are received from various consultants. It will be accompanied by "five or six supporting papers" prepared by persons who have participated in the study.

In presenting the document Dr. Niles listed a six-point outline of main concerns of the study. He said these are: the person to whom the Gospel goes, the evangelist, the Church, the world, conversion and the Gospel. EPS, Geneva.

CCIA Asks for Negotiation or Mediation in Algeria

(Rhodes) - Free negotiations between the French government and Algerian rebel leaders were advocated by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs in a resolution read to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Rhodes.

The CCIA's director, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, who presented the recommendation, emphasized that the time for achieving a settlement is short and that if efforts for negotiation fail "international mediation, under any form feasible and acceptable to the parties involved, would become not only unavoidable, but also highly desirable".

The CCIA is a joint agency of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches.

A reference in the resolution to alleged atrocities on both sides in the Algerian conflict offers support to "churches and individuals in France denouncing and opposing abuses of varying kinds".

Churches in France are also urged "to exert every effort in support of a peaceful solution" along the lines suggested.

Charles Westphal, a leading pastor of the French Reformed Church, told the committee that the Protestant churches in his country had "sought a negotiated settlement from the first".

He pointed out that General de Gaulle "seeks negotiation by every possible means". He said he favoured negotiations with the "provisional government" of the Algerian rebel forces, but pointed out that opinions about which groups of Algerians and French should be involved in the negotiations might lead to a "Franco-Algerian civil war" in both Algeria and metropolitan France.

Pastor Westphal said he did not like the "threatening" tone in the CCIA's suggestion for possible international mediation.

"I am convinced that France has nothing to fear from equitable negotiation", he said; "mediation must not be a punishment but a help". EPS, Geneva.

Talks with Roman Catholics "Absolutely Informal" say Orthodox

(Rhodes) - An unscheduled meeting between Orthodox and Roman Catholics present in Rhodes for the Central Committee sessions of the World Council of Churches was described as "an absolutely informal contact" and a "friendly talk" in a statement from Orthodox leaders read to the Central Committee in Rhodes.

The statement says the meeting was "without authorization or direction". The meeting was held on the evening of Friday, August 21. Invitation for the talk came to Eastern Orthodox participants in the meeting, including many high-ranking prelates, from two Roman Catholic priests who are attending the Central Committee sessions as accredited press representatives.

They are Father C. J. Dumont, a Dominican from Paris, who edits the review "Istina" a long-time worker for Christian unity and Dr. J. G. M. Willebrands of Utrecht, Netherlands. Father Willebrands, a theological teacher, is a full-time worker on ecumenical questions in the archdiocese of Utrecht and secretary of the international Roman Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Questions.

The informal meeting had been followed by widespread speculation here that it was intended as a first step in conversations on reunion between the two churches.

The message read to the Central Committee was issued by the Metropolitan James of Philadelphia, Turkey, a member of the WCC's Central and Executive Committees, who represents the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, and Professor Basil Ioannidis the chairman of the Greek Committee which has been responsible for local arrangements for the Rhodes meeting. Professor Ioannidis is director of religious affairs in the Greek government's Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. He is also a WCC Central Committee member.

The text of the message follows: "We were very surprised on account of some misunderstandings and great exaggerations which appeared in the press in connection with a friendly talk between Orthodox members and two Roman Catholic guests at the present meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

"The whole truth is that an absolutely informal contact among individuals without any authorization or direction had taken place, as happens on some other occasions in various places, at the level of informal theological contact.

"The Orthodox would like to make it very clear to prevent any wrong interpretation that the main point in the unofficial talk was this type of contact between theological faculties. There was no discussion or negotiation concerning any official contact between the two churches concerned.

"We must repudiate any other interpretation that has been made or published." EPS, Geneva

Bishop Stresses Partnership in Missions

(Hamburg) - "It is a proof of unrealistic thinking to accept lightly the view that the younger churches in Asia and Africa can evangelize their peoples better without the help of their foreign partners". This is the reply made by Bishop Rajah B. Manikam of the Lutheran Church, India to the question often asked whether foreign missionaries are unwanted in these churches today.

In a new publication brought out in Germany in honour of the 60th birthday of Bishop Hanns Lilje of the Evangelical Church of Hanover, Bishop Manikam stresses that a "radical change" is necessary in relations between the "older" and "younger" churches. In his article entitled "A New Epoch in the World Mission of the Church" he maintains that this change does not mean the end of missionary activities but rather the end of an era and the beginning of a new and more meaningful one.

Bishop Manikam sees this new epoch not only as an age of Christian partnership "free from all undertones of superiority and tutelage", where the missionary is no longer synonymous with "white man" and Christianity with "Western civilization", but as an age of ecumenical mission, in which the message of the Gospel and the demand for social and economic justice are brought together, and in which the churches overcome both national and confessional barriers. "The ecumenical movement", he says, "only exists where it is understood that the task of the whole Church is to bring the Gospel to the entire world. The ecumenical movement thus embraces both the movements for mission and for unity. The two are inseparable."

The future tasks of the Church are immense, the Bishop maintains, since the number of non-Christians in the world today is greater than ever before and the number of conversions to Christianity is not keeping pace with the rapid increase in population. In Asia, for example, he pointed out, Christians make up only three per cent of the total population. These facts, the Bishop warned, should restrain us from over-estimating the strength and possibilities of the younger churches.

EPS, Geneva

Icelandic Clergy Ask End to Force in Fishing Dispute

(Reykjavik) - Leading clergy in Iceland have protested against the British Government's use of military methods to enforce fishing rights within the twelve mile limit fixed by Iceland.

In an open letter to British clergymen they say that other countries have protested against the twelve mile limit, "but Britain is the only one which is using military weapons in order to force the Icelandic Republic to abolish regulations which the whole nation, regardless of political opinions, believes to be in conformity with international law and necessary in order to guarantee the future existence of our nation".

The letter continues: "This violation of Christian law and principles will cause a disbelief in British sincerity in maintaining the idea of 'fair play', as well as the ideal of Christian brotherhood".

British clergy are asked to study the situation and influence public opinion to stop British government action.

The letter is signed by Pastor Jakob Jonsson, president of the Ministerial Association of Iceland, Bishop Sigurbjorn Einarsson, association vice-president, and Pastor Jon Thorvardarson, association secretary.

EPS, Geneva.

Full Church Fellowship Among LWF Members Urged

(Amsterdam) - The member churches of the Lutheran World Federation have been asked to grant each other full altar and pulpit fellowship, in a speech delivered in Amsterdam at the annual meeting of the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Theology. The sessions closed on August 15.

Dr. Peter Brunner of the University of Heidelberg said the 61 member churches of the LWF should admit each other's pastors to their pulpits and members to their communion tables. Dr. Brunner questioned whether churches with a common doctrinal basis could join together in a free association without becoming also a united ecclesiastical community and urged the LWF to take active steps to bring its members into such a fellowship.

The commission also dealt with the Department of Theology's scholarship and research programme for young theologians, guest professors and research fellows and allotted \$30,000 for the work during the coming year. The commission's scholarship committee has recently approved grants to 22 applicants for 1959. EPS, Geneva.

Australian Suggests Probe of Church Situation Under Communism

(Sydney) - A leading Australian Protestant clergyman, Dr. Malcolm Mackay, has urged the churches to set up a special commission to investigate "all aspects" of the situation of Christian churches in Communist countries. Approving the request was Father L. P. Moran of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic cathedral in Melbourne who said that Australian Catholics would support the idea.

The suggestion of a study commission followed reports from six Australian Protestant leaders just back from visits to Russia, Czechoslovakia and China, criticised by some churchmen as too optimistic. The leaders said that in the Soviet Union there "appears to be no restraint on freedom of worship".

Dr. Mackay is master of Basser College in the University of New South Wales.

In Brief

Bishop Lajos Vetö, head of the Hungarian Lutheran Church, has had a heart attack and been ordered to take a long rest, according to press reports. The Hungarian Church Press says that during Bishop Vetö's convalescence, the deputy bishop of the church's Northern District, Jozsef Szabe, will take over his duties.

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A Chinese, the Rev. James Chang Ling Wong, has been named the first assistant bishop of Borneo by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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An exhibition, "See How They Live", has been opened in the forecourt of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, depicting the living conditions of refugees in a squatter settlement in Hong Kong. The replica of the refugee living quarters was built by Inter-Church Aid of the British Council of Churches. More than 50,000 persons are expected to visit the exhibition before it closes on September 5.

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Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Istanbul, spiritual leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church conferred for about two hours with Sir Winston Churchill during his recent visit to Istanbul. Later the Patriarch also received Adlai Stevenson, titular head of the Democratic Party in the United States.

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Membership of two autonomous African church bodies in the Lutheran World Federation has been endorsed by the LWF Commission on World Missions. They are the Ovambo Kavango Church of South West Africa with 103,000 members and the Church of Usambara-Digo in Tanganyika with 25,000 members. If accepted the churches will be the first received into LWF membership since its 1957 Assembly. Action will be taken by its Executive Committee next March.

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Forty Roman Catholic prelates and theologians have replied to invitations asking their opinion and advice regarding matters scheduled for discussion at the forthcoming ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII. The invitations were sent to about 2,700 Roman Catholic recipients in all parts of the globe. Vatican officials said "many more replies are expected within the next few weeks".

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The bicentenary of the birth of William Wilberforce, leader in the abolition of the slave trade, will be commemorated August 24 at a service at Westminster Abbey. Participating in the wreath-laying ceremony will be government officials and representatives of various agencies including the Anti-Slavery Society, and British and Foreign Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society.

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DocumentA Message from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (July 27 - August 6, 1959, Sao Paulo, Brazil) addressed to the Member Churches

Meeting in the city of Sao Paulo for the 18th General Council of the World Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian Order, we, delegates, from 53 lands and 78 Churches, found enriching fellowship, friendship and happiness in our common faith and traditions, a treasure we should like to share with our own church people.

We studied and discussed what it means that Jesus Christ is the Lord who is among us as one who serves, and that we are called to serve him. Our experience was that He, the living Servant-Lord, broke into, and cut through our meetings, our worship, our discussions and our conversations, calling both the Church and world of today to repentance and renewal.

We have seen afresh that our common Reformed tradition, with its stress on divine election or calling, gives us in Jesus Christ a vital insight into authentic human life and destiny. That tradition has held together both the freedom and responsibility of men, giving Christian believers the conviction that God has called them in Jesus Christ to a definite calling and task in the world's life and history.

Human life is "the theatre of God's glory", and he has called us each one to his great service as we find our true life in Jesus Christ who has inaugurated the new humanity. To be fully human and to enjoy fullness of life, we have to be linked to God's great purpose in Jesus Christ the Servant Lord. When men no longer have to be convinced about whether life makes sense, but only about what sense life makes, they are set free from self-righteousness, cynicism and despair. They acquire instead an authentic allegiance and a steadfast purpose. They are given the freedom of his service.

The obedient service of God's people to the Servant-Lord came home to us at two particular points:

1) the ecumenical responsibility of the Church. Viewed in the light of reconciliation, all forms, orders, traditions and doctrines of the Church become subject to renewal. Jesus Christ himself is the only criterion of the integrity of the Church, and he is only served when the Church, in every aspect of her life, is subordinate to him alone. The Reformed Churches must bear witness in ecumenical discussions to Jesus Christ the Lord and Head of the Church:

2) our daily work. In our present tensions and divisions, we are called upon to proclaim and to make real to men that Jesus Christ has given us back full and authentic humanity. For many, work today has become mechanised on such a scale, as apparently to deprive it of its human significance. This is true, whether men labour without technology or under its power. We believe that the secret and power of Christ's reconciliation must be imaginatively and steadily related to the conditions under which men labour. Then life becomes person and work fully human.

We would call our fellow-Christians everywhere to an obedient working-out in all their church life as in their daily life in the world, of the call of the Servant-Lord to us his servant people.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

EPS, Geneva.

